



January 2012

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), established the District Contacts for Paraprofessional Issues to disseminate information of importance to paraprofessionals and their supervisors. The focus of this newsletter is to provide resources for more effective teacher and paraprofessional collaboration.

Update for District Contacts for Paraprofessional Issues

Preparation and Training of Paraprofessionals

Below are suggested questions for districts to consider when developing professional development for paraprofessionals:

1. Have knowledge and skills required by paraprofessionals and assistants to work in different positions, programs, and across disciplines been identified and developed?
2. Does the training content provide paraprofessionals and teachers with an understanding of the roles of professionals as team leaders, diagnosticians, program planners and supervisors of paraprofessionals?
3. Does the training content demonstrate respect for children and youth with disabilities and their families, as well as for those who come from diverse ethnic, cultural and language backgrounds?
4. Does the training content include information on the ethical, legal and team-based roles of professionals and paraprofessionals in the delivery of education and related services?
5. Do licensed/certified professionals involved in the training of paraprofessionals have knowledge of and respect for the distinction in certified professional and paraprofessional roles?
6. Is sufficient time and opportunity provided for orientation, initial training and continued competency development?
7. How can different constituencies (e.g., professional associations, provider agencies, IHEs) contribute to the appropriate efforts to improve the quality of teacher/provider-paraprofessional staff development?

Adapted from: (2003) Paraeducators in Education settings: Ethical Issues, in Pickett, A.L. & Gerlach, K., Paraeducators in Education Settings a Team Approach, Austin, TX.



SERC's Paraprofessional as Partners Initiative

2011—2012 Calendar at a Glance

All sessions will be held in the SERC Library Community Room, Middletown

Autism

Wednesday, January 18, 2012

A.M. Session: 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Or

PM Session: 5:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.

English Language Learners

Thursday, February 9, 2012

A.M. Session: 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Or

PM Session: 5:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.

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Working Together: Teacher-Paraprofessional Collaboration 2

Fee: \$15.00 per person

For more information and to register online, visit: www.ctserc.org and click on "Professional Development"

Save the Date!

**17th Annual Statewide Conference Paraprofessionals As Partners
Wednesday, November 14, 2012, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Cromwell, CT**

Update for District Contacts for Paraprofessional Issues

January 2012

WORKING TOGETHER: TEACHER-PARAPROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION

Effective collaboration between teachers and paraprofessionals can help all students successfully access the general education curriculum. Working together, teachers and paraprofessionals can implement research-based strategies and individualize curriculum to improve results for all students. The purpose of this brief is to promote collaboration between teachers and paraprofessionals by identifying the elements of collaboration, delineating classroom roles, and providing a tool to improve efficiency and communication in the classroom.

EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION

Effective teacher-paraprofessional collaboration requires communication and shared classroom expectations. Below are several important elements of collaboration that teams should consider:

- **Define roles** – Ensure that each team member's role in the classroom is clear to everyone, including the students. Clearly define and articulate the paraprofessional's role in supporting instruction and behavior management. When deciding what the paraprofessional's role will be, teachers should balance their own work style preferences with those of the paraprofessional. Teachers should also take into consideration specific skills with which paraprofessionals feel comfortable (French, 2002).
- **Develop a schedule** – Ensure that both team members have a schedule of all of the activities that will occur during a class period or day. The paraprofessional should know his or her role in and the teacher's expectations of those activities (Table 1).
- **Know instructional methods** – Make sure that both the teacher and paraprofessional have a clear understanding of the instructional methods being used. If the paraprofessional is expected to provide support in a specific way, the teacher should ensure that the paraprofessional is familiar with the method required and is comfortable in its use. Paraprofessionals may need professional development to effectively carry out their roles. Teachers should be aware of training that paraprofessionals need and provide them with information about necessary skills and resources (French, 2002).
- **Be aware of student characteristics** – Ensure that both team members are aware of the academic and social needs of the students with whom they work. If students have IEP goals, paraprofessionals should have access to these goals. Teachers and paraprofessionals should communicate about student needs on a regular basis, particularly as students progress toward goals and needs change. Paraprofessionals also must know the confidentiality laws that apply to students with disabilities (French, 2002).
- **Share Classroom Experiences** – Ensure that teachers and paraprofessionals regularly and consistently share with one another observations and experiences they have had with students during the day or class period.

Teachers and paraprofessionals should set a time to meet on a regular basis (Carroll, 2001). This time can be used to discuss students and classroom activities. Meeting regularly also provides paraprofessionals with an opportunity to ask questions, state concerns, and clarify issues. If one paraprofessional is assigned to several teachers, it is beneficial to meet as a group, particularly if all teachers serve the same students.

Adapted from the Access Center: Improving Outcomes for All Students K-8.

http://www.k8accesscenter.org/training_resources/documents/Tchr-ParaCollaboration.pdf

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